

**35 Town Farm Road Task Force Statement in Support of Art. 7:
Appropriate Funding for the Construction of a New Fire Training Facility and Establish a
Stabilization Fund for the Possible Future Relocation of the Training Tower**

Annual Town Meeting June 11, 2022

The 35 Town Farm Road Task Force has asked that this article be on the warrant and today ask the voters at town meeting for one more vote of support for the Town Farm project.

Our Task Force was created by the Select Board in the spring of 2019 and asked to find a new purpose for the former Town Farm buildings at 35 Town Farm Road.

As we reported to the Town Meetings in 2020 and 2021, we have created a plan that the Select Board has unanimously endorsed that will transform the 1837 and 1900 Town Farm buildings into truly affordable senior housing and a new home for the Westford Food Pantry. The Select Board put out a Request for Proposals and in January 2021 the Chelmsford non-profit CHOICE and their development partner SCG Development Partners were chosen for the project. At the fall 2021 Town Meeting voters approved a transfer from CPA Historic Preservation funds to allow the renovation of Town Farm to retain the historic integrity of the existing buildings.

At the fall 2021 Town Meeting we also explained to you, the voters, the need to build an adequate fire training facility for our fire department to replace their outdated and unusable cement training tower that is in the middle of the parking lot of Town Farm and which must be moved for the Town Farm housing development to begin. We explained that CHOICE/SCG will be paying the Town \$580,000 for Town Farm when it takes ownership of the property, anticipated to be in October 2024, which will be after their plans have received all the necessary permits from the Town and after their funding is in hand from State and Federal housing sources. The fall 2021 Town Meeting approved a resolution to earmark that payment for the new fire training facility.

Today, we are asking Town Meeting to appropriate \$580,000 to allow the Fire Department to create the new fire training facility as soon as this fall on a small part of the land owned by the Water Department at 60 Forge Village Road. An RFP was issued last month and bids are in hand. When CHOICE takes ownership of the Town Farm property in two years, they will pay the Town \$580,000 and that money will go into the Town's free cash account and reimburse Westford for the money appropriated today. A similar financing was done for the Town's purchase of 63 Main Street, and the general fund was reimbursed when the house was sold to the Grondine family last year.

We ask your support of the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force and the Westford Fire Department with a Yes vote on this motion.